

Prabuddha Bharata

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upan, I, iii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[XI.—Concluded.]

[Place—Calcutta.

Time—1897, A. D.

Subjects—*The great loving heart of Swamiji.—The disciple's talk with Girish Babu on the ultimate identity between Jnana and love.—Girish Babu's conclusions agree well with Scripture.—His realisation of such truth by dint of devotion to Guru.—Blind-imitation of another is reprehensible.—The Bhakta and the Jnani speak from two different planes and that is why they seem contradictory.—Swamiji's advice regarding the starting of Sevashramas.]*

When all this talk on the theory of creation was going on, the great dramatist, Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh, appeared on the scene. Swamiji gave him his courteous greetings and continued his lessons to the disciple. Girish Babu went on listening with rapt attention, and sat amazed at the wonderfully lucid interpretations of the Vedas Swamiji was giving.

Proceeding with his subject, Swamiji continued: "Sabdas are again divided into two classes, the Vedic Sabdas and those in common human use. I found this position in the Nyaya book called "Sabdasaktiprakasika". There the arguments no doubt indicate great

power of thought, but oh, the terminology confounds the brain.

Now turning to Girish Babu Swamiji said: What do you say, G. C.? Well, you did not care to study all this, your days you pass with your adoration of this and that god, eh?

Girish Babu: "What shall I study, brother? I have neither time nor understanding enough to pry into all that. But this time with Thakur's grace, I shall pass by with greetings your Vedas and Vedanta, and take one leap to the far beyond! He gets you through all these studies, because he wants to get many a thing done by you. But we have no need of them." Saying this, Girish Babu

again and again touched his head with the big Rig-veda volumes, uttering, "All victory to Ramakrishna in the form of the Veda." We have stated it to our readers elsewhere, that when Swamiji used to impart any teaching at any particular time, his hearers would receive such a deep impression of it in their minds that for the time being such teaching or truth would appear to them to be the one thing needful and the most valuable. When he would, thus, dwell on the knowledge of Brahman, the conviction in the mind would be that that is the one goal and aim of human life. Again, when he would speak of Bhakti or Karma, of national progress or of other topics, his hearers would give the highest place in their minds to such duties and feel the keenest longing to carry them out. In the present case, when the subject of Vedic studies had been introduced, Swamiji made the minds of his disciple and others so deeply saturated with the glory of the Vedic knowledge, that they were not able for the time being to see anything more real and needful in life than this knowledge. Girish Babu had noticed all this, and knowing as he did this peculiarity of Swamiji's teachings and the ocean-broad sway of his sentiments, he hit upon a device to have the disciple and others impressed with the equal need of Jnana, Bhakti and Karma in our life.

Swamiji was now in a sort of deep reverie, when Girish Babu suddenly called out to him and said, "Well, hear me please. A good deal of study you have made in the Vedas and Vedanta, but say, did you find anywhere in them any way for us out of all these profound miseries in the country, all these wailings of grief, all this starvation, all these crimes of adultery and the many horrible sins? In the home of so-and-so, for instance, fifty persons every day used to have a feast spread out before them, and now his wife has not put the pot on the oven for the last three days! Into the house of another, the rowdies entered, and killed the females with all the

violence they did them! In another house, the new-born babe has been throttled! So-and-so has embezzled a widow of the whole of her living! Is there anything in your Vedas, say, to cure all these many atrocities of our everyday life?" When Girish Babu was thus painting over and over again these horrid pictures of society, Swamiji remained sitting perfectly quiet and speechless, while at the thought of the sorrows and miseries of his fellowmen, tears began to flow out of his eyes, and seemingly to hide his feelings from us, he rose and left the room.

Meanwhile, addressing the disciple, Girish Babu said, "Did you see, Bāngâl? What a great loving heart! I don't honour your Swamiji simply for being a Pandit versed in the Vedas; but I honour him for that great heart of his which just made him retire weeping at the sorrows of his fellow-beings. Well, you saw before your own eyes how an account of human miseries filled his heart with compassion and spirited away all your Vedas and Vedanta!"

Disciple.— But, Sir, we were having a nice time with our Vedic lessons, and you spoiled it all by raising some wretched topics from the world of Maya and making Swamiji's mind aggrieved over them.

Girish Babu.— Fie! With all these miseries and sorrows smiting the world, you turn your eyes away and sit still to pore over the Vedas! Go, fling away your Vedas and Vedanta!

Disciple.— Oh, you, Sir, love to listen only to the language of the heart, for you have a great feeling heart yourself; but for all these great scriptures, the study of which makes even the whole world melt away before one's mind, you have very little love, indeed. Otherwise how could you disturb the blissful tenour of our study in the way you did?

Girish Babu.— Well, do show me, please, wherein exactly lies any difference between

your Jnana and Prema (love). Just see, my friend, your Guru is as full of love as of learning. Do not even your Vedas say that the three things—Sat, Chit and Ananda—are one and the same? Just think how Swamiji was wonderfully bringing out his great learning, but the moment the world's sorrows are once brought back to his mind, he begins to weep! If your Vedas and Vedanta prove after all any real distinction to be drawn between knowledge and love, then may such Vedas and Vedanta ever honourably remain sealed for me!

The disciple thought within his mind in silence, "After all, these conclusions of Girish Babu really do not contradict the Vedas, I see."

In the meantime, Swamiji returned and asked the disciple, "Well, what was all this talk going on between you?" The disciple said, "Ah, we were talking about the Vedas. What a wonderful thing, Sir! Our Girish Babu has not studied these books, but has grasped the ultimate truths with clean precision!"

Swamiji.— All truths reveal themselves to him who attains to real devotion to the Guru; he has hardly any need of studies. But such devotion and faith are very rare in this world. He who possesses this in the measure of our friend here, need not study the Shastras. But he who rushes forward to imitate him, will only bring about his own undoing. Always follow his words of advice, but never attempt to imitate his ways.

Disciple.— So may I do!

Swamiji.— Not that 'so may I do' simply, do grasp clearly the words I say. Don't nod assent like a fool to everything said. Don't put implicit faith, even if I declare something. First clearly grasp and then accept. Thakur always used to insist on my accepting every word of his only after clear comprehension of it. Walk on your path only with what sound principle, clear argument

and scripture,—all declare as true. Thus by constant reflection, the intellect will become chastened and then only Brahman could be reflected thereon. Do you understand?

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, I do. But the brain gets puzzled with the different views of different men. This very moment I was being told by one, "What will you do with all this studying?" and then you again, Sir, say, "Reflect on what you hear and read about." So what exactly am I to do?

Swamiji.— Both what he and I have advised you are true. The only difference is that the advice of both has been given from different standpoints. There is a stage of spiritual life where all reasonings are hushed up—*मुकास्वादनवत्*—"like some delicious taste enjoyed by the dumb." And there is another mode of spiritual life in which one has to realise the Truth through the pursuit of scriptural learning, through studying and teaching. You have to proceed through studies and reflection, that is *your* way to realisation. Do you see?

Receiving such a mandate from Swamiji, the disciple in his folly took it to imply Girish Babu's discomfiture, and so turning towards him said, "Do you hear, Sir? Swamiji's advice to me plainly is just to study and reflect on the Vedas and Vedanta."

Girish Babu.— Well, *you* go on doing so; with Swamiji's blessings, you will, indeed, succeed in that way."

Swami Sadananda arrived there just that moment, and seeing him, Swamiji at once said, "Do you know, my heart is set agog at the picture of our country's miseries G. C. was depicting just now; well, can you do anything for our country?"

Sadananda.— Maharaj, let the mandate once go forth, your slave is ready.

Swamiji.— First, on a pretty small scale, start a relief-centre, where the poor and the distressed may obtain relief and the diseased

may be nursed. Helpless people having none to look after them will be relieved and served there, do you see ?

Sadananda.— Just as you command, Sir.

Swamiji.— There is no greater Dharma than this service of living beings. If this Dharma can be practised in the real spirit then —मुक्तिः करफलायते—salvation comes as a fruit on the very palm of one's hand.

Addressing Girish Babu now, Swamiji said, "Do you know, Girish Babu, it seems to my mind that even if a thousand births have to be taken in order to relieve the sorrows of the

world, surely I will take them. If by my doing that, even a single soul may have a little bit of his grief relieved, why, I will do it. Methinks, what avails it all to get at only one's own salvation? All men will have to be taken along with oneself on that way. Can you say why a feeling like this comes up foremost ?

Girish Babu.— Ah, otherwise why should he (Thakur) declare you to be greater than all others in spiritual competence !

Saying this, Girish Babu took leave of us all to go elsewhere on some business.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

MODERN science is gradually coming to a very interesting conception of ether. And the important point to note is that the advance is not being made for the sake of any pure speculation, but out of unavoidable necessity. For modern science started with such conceptions of matter and force as were then ready at hand, and as it progressed it had to formulate advancing theories of matter and force. It came to study matter in the terms of atoms and molecules, and its study of force gradually tended towards some hypothesis of the ultimate unity of energy. But soon the atoms and molecules proved too gross and complex for the ever-subtilizing conceptions of matter, and the theory of the electrons came into vogue. But now even this theory of the electrons, as giving us some ultimate conception of matter, is proving unsatisfactory.

One American professor, writing in the "Literary Digest" (New York) for June 9th, 1917, complains: "It seems almost certain that even electricity is done up in pellets to which we have given the name of electrons. That heat also comes in *quanta* seems prob-

able. In fact it is not unlikely that we are on the verge of interpreting everything in Nature as essentially discontinuous." Prof. Milliken of the University of Chicago, who is credited with having for the first time isolated and measured an electron, is of opinion that the discontinuity of matter is an established fact and that electricity itself is granular. Such evidences surely go to confirm the hypothesis of an interatomic ether already mooted by physicists, astronomers and electricians. To quote one advocate of this hypothesis :

It has been discovered that the supposed solid and indivisible atoms are neither wholly nor primarily material. They are discontinuous clusters, chiefly composed of swarms of revolving components called electrons, no nearer together (to quote Sir Oliver Lodge) than "a thousand grains of sand scattered about a church." Of the cubic contents of human form "ninety-nine parts of a hundred are occupied by etheric or immaterial substance accompanied at considerable intervals by the atomic dots that supply the illusion of solidity."

And these data of latest scientific discovery must needs have a remarkable effect on our conception of matter. Commonsense takes matter to be something accessible to our senses. But science comes and carries this conception to a degree of refinement where only some sort of mental conception avails us and the senses withdraw to the plane of gross material action or effects. Now matter is being discovered to be something of which even our mind fails to conceive. Our latest theory of matter, so far as our mental effort implied in the conception is concerned, is practically reducing itself to the abstract idea of pure space. In fact, the substance which we have now to imagine space to be filled with, serves only as a medium of inconceivable tenuity for force to act through. This action of force or energy is conceived of in terms of motion, and motion presupposes space. Now the very definition of matter and force we started with at the outset, involves the *a priori* idea of space, for force is something which moves and matter is something which is moved. This idea of space therefore constitutes the limit for our conceptions of matter. However inconceivable may be the unit of matter, it is something which is extended, something which is in space, and as perfect vacuity is a conception impossible for science, space is nothing but the *extendedness* of matter,—it is a mere quality of matter. This is the Indian theory of the fifth element, *ākāsha*.

Now the ancient theory in India, as put in a nutshell by Swami Vivekananda, is this:—“All matter throughout the universe is the outcome of one primal matter called *ākāsha*; and all force, whether gravitation, attraction or repulsion, or life, is the outcome of one primal force called *Prāna*. *Prāna* acting on *Ākāsha* is creating or projecting the universe. * * Now there is something beyond *Ākāsha* and *Prāna*. Both can be resolved into a third thing called *Mahat*,—the Cosmic

Mind. This cosmic mind does not create *Ākāsha* and *Prāna*, but changes itself into them.” Again in a letter written from America in 1895, Swamiji says, “Our friend was charmed to hear about the Vedantic *Prāna* and *Ākāsha* and the *Kalpas*, which according to him are the only theories modern science can entertain. Now both *Ākāsha* and *Prāna* again are produced from the cosmic *Mahat*, the Universal Mind, the *Brahmā* or *Ishvara*. Mr. Tesla* thinks he can demonstrate mathematically that force and matter are reducible to potential energy. I am to go and see him next week, to get this new mathematical demonstration. In that case, the Vedantic cosmology will be placed on the surest of foundations. I am working a good deal now upon the cosmology and eschatology of the Vedanta. I clearly see their perfect unison with modern science, and the elucidation of the one will be followed by that of the other.” It is evident that the new theory of ether carries modern science a step further towards the fulfilment of Swamiji's prophecy.

For now the next question for science is as to how force and ether relate themselves to each other if they are reduced from their kinetic state of an extended substance and motion to their potential state. But perhaps science may go just far enough to admit a hypothesis of the potential unity of matter and force and may not interest itself in a conception and definition of this potential unity. For it may point out that the real nature of that potentiality is a question for metaphysics, not for experimental science. But in all conscience, no cosmologist can so complacently give up this important enquiry beyond the phenomena of a primal extended substance or ether in a kinetic state of motion or vibration. We have already pointed out how science in tracing the sources of physical phenomena has passed beyond the domain of objective perception to that of subjective

* The world-renowned electrician Nicolas Tesla.

conception, however much its demands on our mental conception be disguised by mathematical symbols. Scientists are already in for using much intensity of thought when conceiving of the ultimate materiality of things, of force as the cause of motion, of astronomical or atomic velocities. So, in fact, however hypothetical the ultimate potentiality of matter and force may sound now, if instead of merely philosophising or speculating on it, as has been so long the way of Western thought to do on every metaphysical question, Western scientists can be proposed some method of actual observation by which to approach this potential state of ether and energy, then there is no reason why scientific thought will not ally itself to this important cosmological enquiry, however metaphysical in nature.

Already the scientists have to admit that in the science of psychology they have to pursue the new method of introspection. In this science, they have to supplement observation, experiment and generalisation by this method of mental introspection. So if it is necessary to recognise this method in science, it is also the duty of scientists to try their best to improve this method. We must strive to make our introspection as definite and perfect as possible, so that our observation of some mental phenomenon may not be obscured or interfered with by any other mental impressions that have got nothing to do with the mental fact which is being observed. Unless our psychologists try to acquire this initial power of accurate introspection, no real solid advance can ever be made in the science of psychology. Now our present contention is that our present-day theory of matter and force has reached such a degree of refinement that it is now impossible for us to proceed further to investigate the next potential state of matter and force unless we have some clear command over this method of real introspection. The moving, all-pervading ether is already of the nature of

a mental conception, and if we want now to observe what its nature is when reduced back to its next potential state, we must bring to bear upon the problem a much deeper intensity of the conceiving mind. We must strive to transcend our ordinary space-consciousness, for the very limit of our conception of matter in extension and motion has been reached, and the next step for us is to get hold of matter as it is before it is kinetized by force to move and spread itself out as ether. We must see matter as it is beyond its quality or phenomenon of *extendedness*.

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This process of intense introspection is known as the method of *Samyama* (संयम) in the Indian science of Yoga. It is by the application of this method that the ancient Indian cosmologists traced all energy and ether to their potential state of *Mahat* or the Cosmic Mind, as Swamiji calls it. In modern European thought, we find practically only one cosmologist and philosopher, Henri Bergson, strongly advocating this introspective method in the name of what he calls Intuition. His intuitive process of "putting back our being into our will, and our will itself into the impulsion it prolongs," is nothing but the Pratyahara of Indian Yoga. It is the first stage of intense introspection. In Bergson's case, this intense withdrawal of the mind into itself resulted in the consciousness of self-involved subjectivity as something like a pure continuity, and he called it the principle of real duration or Time. And it is on the corner-stone of this principle that he raised his wonderful philosophy. It is interesting to watch how by the application of this intuitive method, the only true organon of ultimate cosmological investigations, Bergson takes us to witness the origination of Space, the Kantian category of thought. For on the strength of his intuition, he declares, "It is not enough to determine, by careful analysis, the categories of thought; we must engender them." It is here needless to go

into an account of all the marvellous results for human science and thought which Bergson has developed by primarily applying his method of introspection and which wonderfully bear out most of the conclusions of our Vedantic cosmology.

As we have suggested before, our idea of space constitutes a barrier, as it were, between the kinetic phenomena of matter and energy and their potential state, and it is impossible for us to surmount this barrier unless we have recourse to this method of intense introspection. By the pursuit of this method we shall find that as the tension or intensity of the concentrated mind grows, the idea of space vanishes of itself. The mind concentrated on its own energy or will thus transcends all spatiality; but as we relax the tension of the concentrated mind, the very relaxation reduces itself into a feeling of extension and the idea of spatiality emerges. Now it will be admitted by all that the scientific term 'Force' derives all its meaning from our internal experience of volitional

energy as released through the mechanism of our body. If we apply intense introspection to this phenomenon of will-energy, we find that as this energy intensifies in this self-potentializing action, it frees itself from all taint of spatiality, but as, by an inverse order of activity, it relaxes itself, it kinetizes itself into a growing feeling of extension. So spatiality is but the inverse order of a process of intensifying the will recoiling on itself. This experience of the human mind, easily revealed to anyone who practises intense introspection, is of the highest value to our modern investigations into the origin and source of matter and energy. And if the introspective method called *Samyama* by Patanjali be sincerely pursued by a properly qualified group of scientists, the very process by which the *Mahat* or Cosmic Mind projects itself as ether and force pervading all space, will come to be as much a matter of scientific observation as any remarkable scientific phenomenon, only the apparatus which is to give us access to the fact observed will be, in this case, the observer's own expert mind.

THE INDIAN PROBLEM.

(2) ITS SPIRITUAL ASPECT.

AS we have seen last month, the very corner-stone of Indian politics is the *Prajā-dharma* of the mass of the Indian people. No system of Indian political life can ever stand or thrive if it be not raised on this foundation of *Prajā-dharma*. Already the effect of trying to thrust the state-centred politics of the West on the mass of Indian people has proved destructive and disintegrating. The educated men have lost their old keen interest in the weal or woe of the villages. They have taken the life of the state and the city to be the only conceivable centre of every conceivable system of collective life. The old cement of untold ages

between the educated middle-class and the masses has almost melted away, and the villagers have lost all interest and enthusiasm for looking at things from a communal standpoint. The place thus left vacant in village life by the educated intelligence of the country can never be properly filled up by the State reaching out to the villages through its subordinate officers and agents. It is only the natural leaders of people in the villages, who can infuse by example and inspiration those civic and patriotic virtues in their minds without the practice of which no collective life can thrive in any country. If these natural leaders be ignored, no Govern-

ment from above can lead the common people to build up their own life on any lines chosen for them. It can organise their fears, their jealousies, their avarices, their selfish ambitions, but it can never organise their own collective life. But suppose the educated people in the country return to the villages with their new ideas and schemes of state-centred politics borrowed from the West, will they not then occupy the place of the old natural leaders of the people?

No; for in India the leading which people follow with a *sufficient* degree of fervour and self-sacrifice, must always ultimately come from acknowledged spiritual greatness. The criterion of leadership in India was thus pitched high long long ago, and in any noble cause that demands collective selflessness the people can never trust themselves for long to any leadership that fails to fulfil this criterion. That strong sense of trusting submission to the leader which only can carry men through great and long-sustained undertakings of national import, it is impossible to evoke from the Indian heart unless he who leads is a man to whom its spiritual allegiance is also due. The Indian judges his true leader not so much by his ideas and abilities as by his real character based on some deep *religious* sincerity. These characteristics have become ingrained in the Indian nature, and they are bound to assert themselves more and more even in the arena of the public activities of our half-Westernised countrymen, the more they are required to put forth well-sustained efforts in their public enterprises.

And in the work of organising the villages, the work of utmost urgency, the task of the most vital and fundamental importance, there are peculiar circumstances that have to be taken into account. In the first place, diseases of disorganisation have already appeared in our village life,—the evils of jealousy, dissension, mutual suspicion and selfishness. If an educated villager appeal to his neigh-

bours in the cause of the country's welfare, his sincerity, in the majority of cases, is apt to become a matter of much speculation and doubt among co-villagers, who had perhaps for long some taint of jealousy in their relations with the family or party of the man who makes the appeal. Every one who knows the present disorganised trend of life in the villages, will admit how difficult it has become now for any local man to stand up among his co-villagers and inspire them with the requisite amount of confidence and enthusiasm, with a warm, sincere spirit of co-operation, for any work of organising the life of the village. This is therefore the very first question that has to be settled in connection with our work of organising the villages.

Who is to combat and remedy these diseases of disorganisation eating into the very vitals of that village life which is the real sap and foundation of the whole nation in India? Who, we reply, but the spiritual man who has no household interests of his own, who has renounced all worldly good for himself, and stays among the villagers only for the sake of thinking and bringing out the ways and means of their own well-being? Almost every cluster of villages in India have from time immemorial provided and set apart, for such a spiritual worker to sojourn in their midst, some templed roof and shelter, some shrine or *dharmasala* or *thakurbari* in some form or other. What we have got to do now is to find for these sacred habitations scattered all over the villages in India the true sojourners that they were meant for, and from them to expand the work of starting new centres of spiritual force. And what will be the work of this new order of Sadhus and Brahmacharies? In the first place, the Order that they represent must be one which commands universal confidence and reverence. Going forth as the representative of such an Order and the disciple of universally revered saints, he must make his abode in the village the centre of religious worship and Dharma

in the real sense. After their day's work, the villagers would make it their pleasantest duty to gather under his roof and take part in religious worship and discourses. There through talks and useful informations, the horizon of their intellect will be widened and their hearts inspired to work for the common good of their village. There from this centre the impulse and enthusiasm to work in a truly religious spirit will come to the villagers. With this selfless religious man moving among all the men of the village as the embodiment of a ruling idea of unity and co-operation, of the guiding spirit of the whole work, the villagers will revive and elect their own Panchayet, will devise and carry out means for improving the village sanitation, agriculture, education, arts and industries. Every item of work in the common cause will be sacred as a Dharma to the village people, and the new scheme of Prajā-dharma will rise all over the country.

And in this work of reviving the Prajā-dharma of the people, the Sadhus and Brahmanas will only give the impetus, the inspiration, the direction, and the people themselves through their panchayets and circle committees and district committees will actually carry out the whole work. Here the Sadhus have only to work at the foundations. They have to get the village people to work and work in the spirit of their Dharma. They have to start the machinery everywhere and then stand aside to supply the spiritual force. This kind of working at foundations they will have to do both in the villages and in the district and provincial towns. For it is the Prajā-dharma that we want to revive, and not any type of secular Western politics. The organisation of life in the whole of India cannot but be a work essentially of spiritual forces, and that, not merely in the sense of having an ultimate criterion of righteous conduct to apply at every step of the work, but in our national Indian sense of making religion the governing end, the organising principle and the

motive force in every pursuit of our life. In the pages of this journal, this our national way of organising life has been discussed and explained again and again, specially in a series of articles headed "Religion as the Nation-builder." We have been discussing almost every month the principles and features of that spiritual type of Indian nationalism which it has only been the mission of Indian history to evolve, and which if we neglect to recognise and work out now in the present crisis of our history, we shall only be hastening the most dismal future for our country, aye, our annihilation—the precise term which Swami Vivekananda used again and again in his warning against the political type of nationalism.

But in the present article, we are discussing only the practical ways and means, and not the principles of our distinct nationalism. In this connection it is just enough for us to remember that all the real formative forces in the upbuilding of life in India in all its fundamental aspects have ever been spiritual, and the problem of a comprehensive and reconstructive spiritual force has been the most central problem in our history for the last century. Ever since the sweeping wave of Western civilisation rushed into the stagnant currents of our life in India, the orbit of our life has been trying to rediscover amidst wholesale confusions its true centre of gravity in a newly reconstructed, dynamic spirituality. We have been most intently in quest of a spirituality that will interweave all the lost but living threads of our past into the hope and promise of a glorious mission of our country in this world. This spirituality has now revealed itself in our midst in all its comprehensive and synthetic force and potency, so that no past achievement in the line will now be lost, as also no present achievement. For we have a revelation of religion in the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his apostle, which carries all spirituality to its ultimate unity and universality on the one

hand and broadens it enough on the other hand to embrace within itself every sincere spiritual effort of every religious sect, denomination and creed in this world. And the most important point to remember with regard to this revelation is that it is not any mere intellectual synthesis impotent to organise life on any vast scale. It is a revelation that has been lived with a wonderful intensity of soul-force, with a profound vision of its inevitable significance for the future of our countrymen as well as of the whole world. The great dynamo of an all-comprehending spirituality has now been set agoing behind all of us in India, and what is only required of us now is to file in to have its great moulding force playing upon our lives, no matter how the individual aspect of our lives may happen to be blended up with the inspiration of diverse personalities and creeds. For a great national banner of spirituality has been unfurled before us, and men of all faiths and creeds may rally under it in the name of their own contributions to the synthetic spirituality of Mother India. In the person of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has been given to us the God-revealed symbol of our national religious unity, and it is only by rallying round such a living symbol of religious unity that we of India can perpetuate truly and inalienably the deepest bond of our national unity. For in India no bond of a mere political unity will ever go deep enough to organise those fundamental interests of human life that lie closest to the Indian soul. In other countries the interests of a political unity may easily rise superior for ever to the interests of their religious life, but in India such superiority can only be the need of some exceptional circumstances. In India, unity will never come as a natural, inevitable and inalienable fact of our national life until behind the community of our political interests there is a lasting and common meeting ground for the religious life of the diverse religious sects and creeds. In one

word, the foundation of our national unity must ever be spiritual.

In the light of the above considerations, the following appeal of Swami Vivekananda to his countrymen becomes full of significance: "The highest ideal in our Scriptures is the Impersonal, and would to God everyone of us here were high enough to realise that Impersonal ideal; but, as that cannot be, it is absolutely necessary for the vast majority of human beings to have a Personal ideal; and no nation can rise, can become great, can work at all, without enthusiastically coming under the banner of one of these great ideals in life. Political ideals, personages representing political ideals, even social ideals, commercial ideals, would have no power in India. We want spiritual ideals before us, we want enthusiastically to gather round great spiritual names. Our heroes must be spiritual. Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name."

So, just as we have pointed out that in the fundamental work of reviving the Prajā-dharma of the people, it is a band of all-renouncing religious workers that must toil among village people to set the machinery of our national work in operation in the rural areas, so also in the larger and higher spheres of this work, it is from religion that the real inspiration and direction have always to come. For the national mission of India among the nations of the world is spiritual, and those who will be placed at the helm of our national affairs must needs have their chart of national politics and principles traced for them by the trustees of our national spirituality. The actual spiritual needs and problems of our collective life must always govern the pursuits of all our other ends of life, political, educational, economic and so on, both as to their quality and measure. Our national workers, therefore, must have the vision of their aims

and practical courses constantly clarified by the wisdom of those spiritual leaders of their countrymen whose lives are wholly consecrated to the ultimate national mission of their country.

Thus, in this brief discussion of the Indian problem in all its fundamental bearings, we clearly see that keen as the material aspect of this problem must have come to be, it is impossible for us to bring about in India that organisation of life on a truly national scale which only can solve for ever her urgent material problems, unless and until we take the fullest advantage of those spiritual forces which, for the self-same purpose, India has been working up and concentrating during the last century as the underlying basis of the glorious national life which we are being called upon to build up as the fittest vehicle through which our quota of contributions is to go to the culture and thought of modern humanity.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CXXV.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

Ghaziipur,
February, 1890.

Beloved Akhandananda,

Very glad to receive your letter. What you have written about Thibet is very promising, and I shall try to go there once. In Sanskrit Thibet is called the *Uttarakuruvarsha*, and is not a land of *Mlechchhas*. Being the highest tableland in the world it is extremely cold, but by degrees one may become accustomed to it. Of the manners and customs of the Thibetans you have written nothing; why, if they are so hospitable, did

they not allow you to go on? Please write everything in detail, in a long letter. I am sorry to learn that you will not be able to come, for I had a great longing to see you. It seems that I love you more than all others. However, I shall try to get rid of this Maya too.

The Tantric rites among the Thibetans that you have spoken of, arose in India itself, during the decline of Buddhism. It is my belief that the Tantras in vogue amongst us, were the creation of the Buddhists themselves. Those Tantric rites are even more dreadful than our doctrine of *Vāmāchāra*; for in them adultery had got a free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralised through immorality, that they were driven away by Kumarila Bhatta. As some Sannyasins speak of Sankara, and the *Bāḍis* of Sri Chaitanya, that he was in secret an Epicure, a drunkard and one addicted to all sorts of abominable practices,—so the modern Tantric Buddhists speak of the Lord Buddha as a dire *Vāmāchārin*, and give an obscene interpretation to the many beautiful precepts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, such as the *Tattva-gāthā* and the like. The result of all this has been that the Buddhists are divided into two sects now-a-days; the Burmese and the Sinhalese have generally set the Tantras at naught, have likewise banished the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, and at the same time have thrown overboard the Amitābha Buddhism held in regard among the Northern School of Buddhists. The long and short of it is that the Amitābha Buddha and the other gods whom the Northern School worship, are not mentioned in books like the *Prajñāpāramitā*, but a lot of gods and goddesses are recommended for worship. And the Southern people have wilfully transgressed the Shastras and eschewed the gods and goddesses. The phase of Buddhism which declares, 'Everything for others,' and which you find spread throughout Thibet, has greatly struck modern Europe. Concerning that

phase, however, I have a good deal to say—which it is impossible to do in this letter. What Buddha did was to break wide open the gates of that very religion which was confined in the Upanishads to a particular caste. What special greatness does his theory of Nirvāṇa confer on him? His greatness lies in his univalled sympathy. The high orders of Samādhi etc., that lend gravity to his religion, are almost all there in the Vedas; what are absent there are his intellect and heart, which have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world.

The Vedic doctrine of Karma is the same as in Judaism and all other religions, that is to say, the purification of the mind through sacrifices and such other external means,—and Buddha was the first man who stood against it. But the inner essence of the ideas remained as of old,—look at that doctrine of mental exercises which he preached, and that mandate of his to believe in the Suttas instead of the Vedas. Caste also remained as of old, (caste was not wholly obsolete at the time of Buddha) but it was now determined by personal qualifications, and those that were not believers in his religion were declared as heretics, all in the old style. "Heretic" was a very ancient word with the Buddhists, but then they never had recourse to the sword (good souls!) and had great toleration. Argument blew up the Vedas, but what is the proof of your religion?—Well, put faith in it!—the same procedure as in all religions. It was however an imperative necessity of the times and that was the reason of his having incarnated himself. His doctrine is like that of Kapila. But that of Sankara, how far more grand and rational! Buddha and Kapila are always saying,—the world is full of grief and nothing but that,—flee from it—aye, for your life, do! Is happiness altogether absent here? It is a statement of the nature of what the Brahmos say—the world is full of happiness! There is grief, ferseeth, but what can be done?

Perchance some will suggest that grief itself will appear as happiness when you become used to it by constant sufferance. Sankara does not take this line of argument,—he says this world *is and is not*—*manifold yet one*, I shall unravel its mystery—I shall know whether grief be there, or anything else; I do not flee from it as from a bugbear. I will know all about it—as to the infinite pain that attends its search, well, I am embracing it in its fullest measure. Am I a beast that you frighten me with happiness and misery, decay and death, which are but the outcome of the senses? I will know about it—will give up my life for it. There is nothing to know about in this world—therefore, if there be anything beyond this relative existence—what the Lord Buddha has designated as *Prajñāpāram*—the transcendental—if such there be, I want that alone. Whether happiness attends it or grief, I do not care. What a lofty idea! How grand! The religion of Buddha has reared itself on the Upanishads, and upon that also the philosophy of Sankara. Only, Sankara had not the slightest bit of Buddha's wonderful heart, dry intellect merely—for fear of the Tantras, for fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil he amputated the very arm itself! * One has to write a big volume if one has to write about them at all—but I have neither the learning nor the leisure for it.

Lord Buddha is my Ishtam—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was

* In his anxiety to defend the purity of the Vedic religion against the excesses of Tantrikism, which was capturing the rank and file of his countrymen, Sankara neglected the problem of the latter stigmatised as Sudras by the Vedicists. This is perhaps the meaning of Swamiji. It seems he could never forgive Sankara for applying in his commentary on the Brahmasutras the old logic of forbidding Vedic rituals to the Sudras to the more modern question of their right to higher modes of worship (Upāsana) and knowledge (Jñāna) of the Jñānakānda.

himself God, I fully believe it. But no one has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God Himself has the power to make Himself limited. The translation of the *Gandira-Sutta* that you have made from the *Suttanipāṭa*, is excellent. In that book there is another *Sutta*—the *Dhaniya Sutta*—which has got a similar idea. There are many passages in the *Dhammapadam* too, with similar ideas. But that is verily to be the last stage,

ज्ञानवित्तान्तुमात्मा कृतस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः

—when one has got perfectly satisfied with Knowledge and Realisation, who is the same under all circumstances, and has gained mastery over his senses—who has not the least regard for his body as something to be taken care of,—it is he who may roam about at pleasure like the mad elephant caring for naught. Whereas a puny creature like myself should practise devotion, sitting at one spot, till he attains Realisation,—and then only should he behave like that—but it is a far-off question—very far indeed.

चिन्ताग्रन्थमदेव्यभेदमशनं पानं सत्त्वादिपु
स्वातन्त्र्येण निरङ्कुशा स्थितिरभीतिर्ह्यशमनं वने ।
वस्त्रं चालनशोषणादिरहितं दिग्वास्तु शय्या मही
सञ्चारो निगमान्तर्वीचीयु विदां कीडा परे व्रजसि ॥

विमानमालम्ब्य शरीरेनेतद्-

भुनक्त्यशेषान् विदयानुपस्थितान् ।

परेच्छया बालवदात्मवेत्ता

योऽप्यक्तलिङ्गोऽननुपक्तबालः ॥

दिग्गम्बरो वापि च सम्बरो वा

त्वग्गम्बरो वापि चिदम्बरोऽस्य ।

उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा

पिशाचवद्वापि चरत्स्वप्न्यान् ॥ *

—To a knower of Brahman food comes of itself, without effort—he drinks water wherever he gets it. He roams at pleasure everywhere—he is fearless, sleeps sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a crematorium, and treads

the Path which the Vedas have taken but whose end they have not seen. His body is like the sky, and he is guided, like a child, by others' wishes; he is sometimes naked, sometimes in gorgeous clothes, and at times has only Juanam as his clothing; he behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a madman, and at other times again like a ghoul, indifferent to cleanliness.

I pray to the holy Feet of our Guru that you may have that state, and you may wander like the rhinoceros.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

KAIVALYOPANISHAT.

(Concluded.)

एवं मायापरिमोहितात्मा

शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।

स्त्रियन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः

स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति ॥ १२ ॥

12. With his self thus deluded by Maya or Ignorance, it is he who identifies himself with the body and does all sorts of things. In the awaking state it is he who attains satisfaction (a) through the varied objects of enjoyment, such as women, food and drink.

(a) Satisfaction: Implying also the opposite, viz., pain due to undesirable experiences.

[The इयद् after स्त्री is Vedic.]

स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता

स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोकैः ।

सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने

तमोऽभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति ॥ १३ ॥

13. In the dream-state that Jiva feels pleasure and pain in a sphere of existence created by his own Maya or Ignorance. During the state of profound sleep, when everything is dissolved (into their causal state),

he is overpowered by Tamas or non-manifestation and comes to exist in his form of bliss (a).

(a) Ignorance and bliss—these are the two characteristics of the experience in the state of *Sushupti* or profound sleep. This element of ignorance makes this state of *Sushupti* the opposite pole of *Samadhi*, the highest illumination. Vide *Chhandogya*, viii. 11.

पुनश्च जन्मान्तरकर्मयोगात्-

स एव जीवः स्वपिति प्रबुधः ।

पुरत्रये कीडति यश्च जीव-

स्ततस्तु जातं सकलं विचित्रम् ॥

आधारमानन्दमखण्डबोधं

यस्मिंस्तु यति पुरत्रयं च ॥ १४ ॥

14. Again, through his connection with deeds done in previous births, that very Jiva returns to the dream-state, or the waking state. The Being (a) who sports in the three cities (viz., the states of wakefulness, dream and profound sleep)—from Him has sprung up all diversity. He is the substratum, the bliss, the indivisible Consciousness, in whom the three cities dissolve themselves.

(a) *The Being who sports etc.*—The *Turiya* or the Transcendental state is referred to in this Sloka. No distinction is made here between the Jiva and Brahman, which are eternally one, the difference between them being only apparent, due to ignorance.

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।

सं प्राप्युर्ज्योतिरापः पृषिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ १५ ॥

15. From This spring up Prana (Vitality), mind, all the organs, sky, air, fire, water, and the earth that supports all (a).

This identical Sloka occurs also in *Mundaka*, ii. 3.

(a) *Supports all*:—that is, sentient and insentient objects.

यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।

सृष्ट्वात्सृष्टमन्तरं नित्यं तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ॥ १६ ॥

16. That which is the Supreme Brahman, the soul of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal,—That is thyself, and thou art That.

जगत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यादिप्रपञ्चं यत्प्रकाशते ।

तद्ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा सर्वबन्धैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ १७ ॥

17. 'That which manifests the phenomena, such as the states of wakefulness, dream and profound seleep, I am that Brahman,'—realising thus one is liberated from all bonds.

त्रिषु धामसु यद्भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगश्च यद्भवेत् ।

तेभ्यो विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रोऽहं सदाशिवः ॥ १८ ॥

18. What constitute the enjoyable, the enjoyer and the enjoyment, in the three abodes (a),—different from them all am I, the Witness, the Pure Consciousness, the Eternal Good.

(a) *Three abodes*—the 'three cities' mentioned in Sloka 14.

मध्येव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् ॥ १९ ॥

19. In me alone is everything born, in me does everything rest, and in me is everything dissolved. That Unity, the Brahman, I am.

अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्वन्-

महानहं विश्वमहं विचित्रम् ।

पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो

हिरण्यमयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि ॥ २० ॥

20. I am minuter than the minute, I am likewise the greatest of all, I am the manifold universe. I am the Ancient One, the Purusha, and the Ruler, I am the Effulgent one, and the All-good.

[For a similar idea compare *Katha*, ii. 20.]

अपाणिपादोऽहमचिन्त्यशक्तिः

पश्याम्यक्षुः स शृणोम्यकर्णः ॥

अहं विजानामि विविक्तरूपो

न चास्ति वेत्ता मम चित्सदाऽहम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Without arms and legs am I (a), of unthinkable power; I see without eyes, and I hear without ears. I know all, and am different from all. None can know me. I am always the Intelligence.

(a) Compare *Śvetasvatara*, iii. 19-20.

वेदैरनेकैरहमेव वेद्यो

वेदान्तरुद्धेदविदेव चाहम् ।

न पुण्यपापे मम नास्ति नाशो

न जन्म देहन्द्रियबुद्धिरस्ति ॥ २२ ॥

22. I alone am taught in the various Vedas, I am the revealer of the Vedānta or Upanishads, and I am also the Knower of the Vedas (a). For me there is neither merit nor demerit, I suffer no destruction, I have no birth, nor any self-identity with the body and the organs.

(a) The first half of the Sloka also occurs almost verbatim in *Gīta*, xv. 15.

न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति

न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चास्वरं च ।

एवं विदित्वा परमात्मरूपं

गुहाशयं निष्कलमद्वितीयम् ॥ २३ ॥

समस्तसद्भि सदसद्विहीनं

प्रयाति शुद्धं परमात्मरूपम् ॥ २४ ॥

23-24. For me there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether. Thus realising the Paramatman, who lies in the cavity of the heart, who is without parts, and without a second, the Witness of all, beyond both existence and non-existence,—one attains the pure Paramatman Itself.

इति प्रथमः खण्डः ।

End of the First Part.

यः शतरुद्धीयमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति सुरा-
पानात्पूतो भवति ब्रह्महत्यात्पूतो भवति कृत्या-
कृत्यात्पूतो भवति तस्मादविमुक्तमाश्रितो भवति ।
अत्याश्रमी सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेत् ॥

1. He who studies the *Satarudriya* (a), is purified as by the Fires (b), is purified from the sin of drinking, purified from the sin of killing a Brahman, from deeds done knowingly or unawares. Through this he has his refuge in Shiva, the Supreme Self (c). One who belongs to the highest order of life (d) should repeat this always or once (a day).

This part prescribes an easier mode of Sādhana or practice for those who are not adepts in the meditation of the Oneness of Brahman.

(a) *Satarudriya*.—The hundred Slokas in praise of Rudra, that form a part of the Yajurveda. They are considered very holy and are daily read by thousands of Hindus.

(b) *Fires*: that is, the sacrificial fires enjoined for daily tending and care by the Śrutis and Smritis. They used to form a life-long companion of every Vedic householder in India ever since his investiture with the holy thread.

(c) *Shiva or the Supreme Self*.—In this Upanishad the meditation of Shiva has been recommended in several previous Slokas, of course regard being had to His Supreme or Nirguna aspect. The word *Avimukta* in the text, which is a common epithet of Shiva, literally means one never deviating from his inmost essence of oneness, never mixing up with the phantasm of Maya.

(d.) *Highest order of life*—viz., Sannyasa.

अनेन ज्ञानमाप्नोति संसारार्णवनाराशनम् ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं कैवल्यं फलमश्नुते

कैवल्यं फलमश्नुत इति ॥ ११ ॥

By means of this, one attains the Knowledge that destroys the ocean of Samsara or repeated Transmigration. Therefore, knowing thus one attains the fruit of Kaivalya or Liberation, verily one attains Liberation.

इत्यथर्ववेदे कैवल्योपनिषत्समाप्ता ।

Here ends the Kaivalyopanishad included in the Atharva-Veda.

IN MEMORIAM.

(BY AN INDIAN FRIEND.)

Frank Alexander is no more. Not only to all the members of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, and to thousands in India and abroad who are friends of this Order, but also to a wide circle of acquaintances among the outside public, the sad news will come as an unhappy shock that makes the mind pause and seek to unravel the meaning, - for seldom do we meet a soul so arresting in all that it expressed of itself, a mind so clear and soaring in its visions, an understanding so swift and strong in its grip of facts, and withal a heart with so much of the child in the transparency and effervescence of feeling and, sometimes, of temper. A career hardly begun, a career so full of gifts and promise, a career before which high spiritual achievements seemed so surely to be waiting, has ended, alas, most abruptly,—so flashing, so meteoric!

The early years of his life spent in a Catholic convent among nuns, he began his acquaintance with earthly life as a child of religion. His boyish soul must have chafed for long under the monotonous environments of an old-world nunnery, a soul big with broad and ripened possibilities, the powerful *Samskaras* of thought and impulse that struggled and wriggled within for want of proper scope. He, however, received a fairly good education, specially in literature and Roman history, in this nunnery of Omaha in Nebraska, U. S. A. The Roman Catholic rituals and sentiments, he adopted with an easy aptitude of mind, but deep within his soul he keenly felt a persistent blank, which nothing that he, with the keenness of his searching mind, found in the religious world opening for him with his boyish life, could at all fill up. As he grew up to be a youngman, the call of the big outside world grew also in its strength and urgency, and at the age of seventeen he ran away from the nunnery. Next we find him working as a bell-boy in some hotel in an American city, the first plank that held him above the sweeping, rushing waves of modern city life. Another plunge, and we find the boy employed in a newspaper office. And here in this sphere of work his energetic mentality and his great expressive intellect

found some pleasant scope to exercise themselves. In this noisy, busy period of his life, his inborn capacity as a good, forcible, impressive writer used to be taken advantage of not only by newspaper men but also by wealthy friends. But during all these literary occupations, his mind was working all along on the ultimate problems of life, and it was busy passing under a keen critical review all the various religious movements of the day. It was in the course of all these feverish studies that some books of the Swami Vivekananda first met his eyes and the new ideas sank imperceptibly deep into his soul. Then as his surface mind remained busy with his professional duties and worries, the leaven of these new ideas went on working below, so that athwart all the many struggling conceptions of religion and religious life which were then churning the depths of his mind, the vision began to unfold itself of a real spiritual plane which beckoned to his soul, a plane where the great Swami's spirituality shone as the glorious orb of all life and light. And thus perhaps the ruling *Samskara* of a bygone life slowly worked its way towards its own!

When Mr. Alexander was serving on the staff of a newspaper at Detroit, Michigan, he came to know of the sojourn in the town of the Sister Christine, a consecrated worker in the cause of Swami Vivekananda. There was no time to lose, and with a few words on the telephone that interview was arranged which brought about the turning point in the life of this elect one of Swamiji. He forthwith flew to that sphere of discipleship for which his soul had been preparing and maturing itself through all its restless round of struggles and vicissitudes. He felt that the call had now come to dedicate himself to the service of Swamiji and his great ideals, and this feeling of self-dedication left him no choice but to come over to India, the home of the Order which Swamiji organised for his work, and there seek that inspiration and training which would make him the fit disciple of the great world-teacher.

The beginning of the year 1911 saw young Francis Alexander moving among the joyous band of Sadhus of the Belur Math and their friends in Calcutta with a new sense of spiritual achievement and freedom. The passage of his mind from Western environments and modes of life to a new

world of thought and feeling was rendered smooth and easy to a considerable degree by his intimate fraternity with a Bengalee friend in Calcutta with whom he lived at Baghbazar, and it is wonderful how soon he affiliated himself to his new Hindu surroundings. The striking brilliance, freshness and alacrity of his mind attracted friendships wherever he went, and when at the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda celebrated by the Vivekananda Society at the Belur Math, a Calcutta audience was treated to a powerful, impressive speech he made on the occasion, his reputation as a brilliant speaker spread far and wide among the followers and admirers of Swamiji. It was at once found out that his soul had innate possibilities to become a wonderful mirror to reflect in human language the great personality and life of the world-teacher who had drawn him to his feet by the inscrutable cords of fate.

Next, in the course of the same year, we find him translated to the Himalayas toiling with some members of the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama at the important literary work of bringing out a comprehensive biography of the Swami Vivekananda. His valuable labours in this cause alone are such as to immortalise his name along with this momentous literature on an immortal world-teacher, as all his collaborators in the work would be glad to admit. Moreover, during his stay at Mayavati, his writings for the Prabuddha Bharata proved to be a source of great attraction for the journal, and his assumed pseudonyms on its pages were many and interesting to recall. The book compiled from some of his writings in this journal and entitled "In the Hours of Meditation" yet commands a large sale, specially in the West. In September, 1913, he left the Mayavati Ashrama and took up his abode at the town of Almora. Here for two years he lived the life a Sadhu, relying for maintenance mainly on gifts of food and money.

These two years at Almora had the deepest moulding influence on his religious life and character. Privileged to profit by the holy company of His Holiness the Swami Shivananda of the Belur Math, he obtained at Almora that loving spiritual guidance which had never come to his lot before. For like a child he had always waited hitherto, during his sojourn in India, to be taken up by the love and sympathy of a spiritual

guide and the restlessness of his mind on the surface had never enabled him to approach with patience the loving hearts of the Elders of the Order who are so ready to help and teach. But at Almora he had to live far away from those personal influences and contacts which had so long tended to provoke his mental restlessness, and the sacred balm of an all-forgiving love and sympathy that he received from the company of a noble Swami soothed his mind and enabled it to dive deeper than ever before into the recesses of his own soul. A great formative period in his spiritual life was coming upon him, and by all means he ought to have allowed this period to continue without upsetting all those essential conditions which it required for itself. But unfortunately he did upset these conditions in order to meet the requirements of a failing health, such as a change of climate and regularity of good diet, and these requirements could well be fulfilled without snatching himself off from those conditions far away to the different atmosphere of a distant land.

But the decrees of Providence are inscrutable. In November of 1915 Francis Alexander went on a visit from Almora to Mayavati. There he learned of the possibility of an offer of passage money from a generous friend, if it were necessary for him to go back to America for some time for the sake of health, and this prospect of a temporary return to America forcibly brought back again the old restlessness of his mind. The spiritual poise he was going to gain seemed lost for a while beyond all hope, and after some struggles in Calcutta he secured the passage money, bought his ticket and sailed for America by the end of the year 1915. All his Indian friends then began to cherish the hope that he would return to India with his health perfectly recuperated and his energies refreshed.

With the help of two American friends who were then in India, Mr. Alexander was able to secure the friendship of noble-hearted people who after his arrival in America stood by him most fraternally till he could set himself on his own legs again, and this he did by re-entering his old arena of journalism. The rest of the sad story may be best gleaned from the following extracts of an American letter:—

"As you might suspect, Frank had the tubercular tendency when he came from India last year.

Then he went to Detroit and worked hard sometimes until 3 in the A. M. and these irregular hours coupled with miserable food and an already weakened constitution and other things, developed the disease probably as early as last September. He suffered from weakness and nightsweats and when he became quite exhausted he came back to Oakland in April, to rest, as he said. We hoped his study of the Christian Science would help him out of the condition. The relaxation was beneficial, but a great restlessness was upon him and after making two very short trips to his friend Mrs. Dudley in the South, he returned and finally determined to go on to Detroit, not to work at once, but to get straightened out as he said, and helped by Christian Scientist friends. After arrival in Detroit a week, he became violently ill, we heard, and upon advice of a doctor was hurried to a hospital, and operated upon for acute Appendicitis. The doctor found not only the intestinal trouble but that the pulmonary condition had invaded the bowels also. He had a private nurse and he had no pain either previous to or after the operation, and his mind, we hear, was very clear all of the time. An increasing weakness took him off. His body was cremated and three Hindu boys and Sister Christine conducted the services; the boys took charge of the ashes and a clipping of the Free Press said that they would send these to the Math. In another letter, dated, Detroit, July 13, 1917, the Sister Christine writes: "Our boy left us this morning at dawn. From the beginning to the end he did not suffer. Last night we expected the end to come at any moment. He was quite clear when awake, but slept much of the time during the night. Late in the night the nurse gave him an alcohol rub. Then he said, 'I am going to sleep now.' He passed out while sleeping. Three days ago he asked the doctors to leave the room. Then he said to me, 'Is Swamiji calling me?' I told him no,—that he was going to get well. He looked at me again with that same strange look, and said 'Good bye' * * * "

And the same "Good bye," so short, so significant, was often felt to be wafted to the inner consciousness after the news reached us in India! Yes, good bye to you, good bye for the present, O noble soul, most strangely caught in the meshes of a frail and weak tenement of flesh, as if in the

mysterious coils of a temporary curse, which you must now be disengaging yourself from at the mandate of your Master whose voice now comes vastly more clear and straight to your soul! For it was indeed a very strange combination,—a mighty soul of the noblest stuff yoked to a weak material sheath doomed to work off the bad taint of some Karma! And so you died young, but not before the task which your Master kept waiting for you alone had been accomplished in India, the land of his birth! Peace now, therefore, to all that curious frenzy of restlessness which kept your deeper self hidden from you in your earthly life!

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

THE FAMINE AND FLOOD REPORT

(OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.)

It is an agreeable task to pass in review the Report of the Relief Work of the Ramkrishna Mission during Flood and Famine in Bengal, Assam, and in the United Provinces in the years, 1915 and 1916. The relief work in question was so extensive and continued for so long a period that it would be impossible in a short review to do full justice to it. We shall therefore content ourselves with briefly noting the different activities.

Under the first section of the work viz., Famine and Flood Relief in East Bengal and Assam (June to November 1915) the Mission had to grapple with:

(i) Famine in Noakhali and South Tippera (June—July 1915), in which it distributed 224 mds. 29 srs. 8 ch. of rice to over 10,000 needy people, besides clothes and a small pecuniary help.

(ii) Flood in North Tippera and Cachar (July to Sept. 1915), in which 1515 mds. 31 srs. of rice were distributed among a maximum of about 7000 famished people, besides clothes and a pecuniary relief of Rs. 596-1-6.

(iii) Famine Relief at Kotalipara, Dt. Faridpur (Sept.—Oct. 1915), and at Duptara, Dt. Dacca, through trusted agents, in which, respectively, Rs. 400 and Rs. 25 were spent.

(iv) Famine at Rajnagar, Dt. Mymensing (Nov. 1915), in which the workers distributed 64 mds. 20 srs. of rice, and Rs. 9-14 in cash.

The next important section of the work was the relief of Distress and Famine brought on by drought, which is divided into the following heads:—

(i) Famine in the Balasore District in Orissa (Sept.—Nov. 1915), in which the Mission distributed 188 mds. of rice, and a small sum in cash.

(ii) Famine and other reliefs in the Bankura Dt. Chief of these was Famine Relief Work on a big scale (Sept. 1915 to Sept. 1916), in which the Mission had to distribute in thirteen months no less than 8915 mds. 4 srs. of rice, 150 mds. 2 srs. 8 ch. of seeds, Rs. 147-3-9 in cash, and 3225 pieces of cloth, old and new. The number of recipients in one month rose at times to seven thousand and over, and at no time fell below a thousand. Among other kinds of relief may be mentioned the measures taken against extreme water-scarcity viz., the re-excavation of the Chota Rajband Canal, over 4 miles in length, the construction of an embankment (56 ft. by 9 ft.) at Rajband, digging some wells and tanks, helping a number of families rendered houseless by fire and storm, with building materials, medical relief on a small scale, distribution of yarn worth Rs. 77-8-3 to some needy weavers, donation of Rs. 200 at Koalpara for developing a weaving school, etc. In the Test Work opened by the Mission from March to October 1916, 15223 men and women got Rs. 2572-0-3 and 129 mds. 12 srs. of rice as wages and remuneration.

(iii) The relief of distress in North Tippera and Sylhet caused this time (May—June 1916) by drought, an irony of Fate! In Tippera 664 mds. 37 srs. 12 ch. of rice were distributed among a large number of recipients, rising at times to over 5000, and Rs. 132-12-3, was distributed in cash, besides 352 pieces of cloth and a quantity of sweet potato. In Sylhet some money was made over to the local relief committees at Habiganj and Nabiganj.

(iv) The relief of distress due to drought at Garbeta, Dt. Midnapore (Aug. 1916). A canal 6572 ft. long was excavated and besides pecuniary and

medical relief, 375 mds. 27 srs. of rice were distributed to the needy.

The Third Section of the work consisted of:

(i) Relief of distress caused by Flood in Districts Benares and Ballia (Sept.—Nov. 1916), in which 521 mds. 20 srs. 14 ch. of rice and food grains were distributed, besides some pecuniary and medical aid.

(ii) Relief of distress due to the Ajoy Flood in Dt. Burdwan (Oct.—Nov. 1916), distributing 300 mds. 26 srs. 8 ch. of rice to the needy.

(iii) Second Relief of Flood distress at Kotalipara, Dt. Faridpur, through the local Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Rs. 100 being spent on the occasion.

The total receipts, including the balance of the Provident Relief Fund, amounted to Rs. 84,076-4-3, and the total expenditure Rs. 82,702-11-3, the balance of Rs. 1,573-9 being deposited in the Chartered Bank.

The moral of the whole thing is plain enough. The Report is a glowing testimony of what organised activities can do. Providential visitations are now a constant evil in India. To mitigate the sufferings of the unhappy victims, we should be prepared beforehand, and the only way to achieve this end is to develop the organising instinct of the people not only in towns and cities but in every village of India, where indeed the mainspring of the national life lies. It will be an excellent training of the head and heart for alike literate and illiterate people to combine in a spirit of real brotherliness in devising effective preventive measures against these scourges of nature, on the principle of organised self-help. We sincerely hope that the day will not be far distant when the whole country will be conscious of its solidarity and will act like one man in the cause of protecting and improving the material basis of our national life.

REVIEW.

1. *Speeches on Indian Questions by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Montagu*: published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, Pp. 319, with a good index. Price Re. 1-8.

No cheap newspaper commendation is necessary to bring to the notice of the reading public in

India the admirable enterprising spirit of the well-known Madras firm who have brought out this timely publication. When just the whole of educated India is thrown into a state of lively interest and expectancy at the news of Mr. Montagu's coming over to India in winter, out comes this little book with mute dignity of the cleverest heraldry from the firm of G. A. Natesan. Who does not expect to follow with the keenest interest the activities of Mr. Montagu when in India? Well, if that is so, you cannot do without a copy of this book, for it is something like the chart you must supply yourself with before you go to examine a big Botanical Garden, for example. Before you can follow how the statesman moves in the sphere of Indian questions, you must know what exactly the angle of his approach has so long been with regard to them. And if you are to lay before his mind your own ideas and facts which he invites you to do, with any amount of success, then you must know beforehand the peculiar principles by which his mind is apt to arrange such facts, the criteria by which he is apt to judge his firsthand impressions, the mental standards by which he values things as they come to his mind. And for all these purposes, it is highly necessary for educated people in India to have some definite access to the mind of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Montagu even before he is face to face before them. And the publication under review is precisely the thing, available to all now, to give them this necessary access. So the value of this book for all who are eager to have a glimpse of the real mind of the great statesman before they find him actually dealing with the people in their midst, can in no way be exaggerated. We recommend this book very gladly to every English-knowing Indian who "should like to know what manner of man this Secretary of State is, who has got to solve one of the most important problems of the British Empire." The get-up is good and handy.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

THE Report of the Ramkrishna Mission, Dacca Branch, for the year 1916 is a record of rapid progress achieved by disinterested labours in a noble cause. The most notable events during the

year were:—the visit of Srimat Swami Brahmananda and Swami Premananda of the Belur Math, and the laying of the foundation-stone of the Dacca Mission and Math by them; the affiliation of the Branch to the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur; entry into the new buildings, on their completion, with the appropriate religious ceremonies performed by Swamis Suddhananda, Dhirananda and others of the Belur Math, and the opening of the "Saurindraprasad Ward" by His Excellency the Governor of Bengal. The missionary work of the Centre consisted in holding weekly religious classes, in giving the public an opportunity of associating with the venerable Swamis mentioned above and organising lectures and discourses. Besides the Library it also conducted a Free Primary School for the depressed classes, and opened the first three classes of a Matriculation School, with an average of 41 free students on the rolls, in which moral instructions were also given. The Centre also gave pecuniary help to poor students. The newly opened Indoor Hospital treated 10 male patients, and the outdoor dispensary 692, including Hindus and Mahomedans of either sex. House to house relief was also undertaken, and cremation of the dead in certain cases. The Dacca Mission also successfully opened cholera and small-pox Relief Works in far-off mofussil villages, and opened Relief Work at the Langaband Bathing Festival. It also gave monthly aids to 15 needy families, and monthly doles of rice to 28 poor families out of the proceeds of house-to-house collection. The total receipts of the Centre including the building fund were Rs. 6757-13-11 during the year, and the total disbursements Rs. 6159-1-2. We congratulate the Dacca Branch of the Mission on its conspicuous success.

THE report of the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, for the month of August, 1917, is as follows: In the indoor department, there were 5 old cases and 33 newly admitted. Of these 27 were discharged cured, 1 died, 1 left treatment, and 9 were still under treatment. In the outdoor department, there were 3226 cases, of which 1464 were new entries and 1762 their repeated numbers. The total receipts in the account books this month were Rs. 236-8-0, and the total disbursements Rs. 226-1-6.